

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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SUBJECT: NEW ATOMIC ENERGY POLICY--JAPANESE QUESTIONS

REF: TOKYO 4631

JAPANESE PRESS COMMENTARY ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S APRIL 7
STATEMENT OF U.S. ATOMIC ENERGY POLICY MADE A NUMBER OF
POINTS THAT SHOULD BE RESPONDED TO BY THE SUGGESTED
COMMISSIONED ARTICLE. THE DIRECT OR INFERRED POINTS:

1. AFTER 19 YEARS OF SELLING "ATOMS FOR PEACE" AND
BELITTling JAPAN'S "NUCLEAR ALLERGY," AMERICA NOW IS
SHIFTING ITS ATOMIC ENERGY POLICY 180 DEGREES. DOES NOT
AMERICA'S PROPOSED RESTRAINT AGAINST NUCLEAR FUEL
REPROCESSING VIOLATE NPT PROVISIONS ON PEACEFUL USES OF
ATOMIC ENERGY?

2. PRESIDENT CARTER'S CLAIM THAT REPROCESSING TO EXTRACT
POLUTONIUM IS UNECONOMICAL CONTRADICTS FINDINGS OF EARLIER
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ERDA STUDY WHILE MAKING APPARENTLY UNSUBSTANTIATED AND
OVERLY OPTIMISTIC CLAIMS ABOUT COSTS AND AVAILABLE
RESERVES OF URANIUM FUEL. STUDY ON WHICH NEW POLICY
SEEMS TO BE BASED APPEARS LESS SCIENTIFIC THAN ERDA'S
STUDY. WHICH SHOULD WE BELIEVE?

3. PRESIDENT CARTER'S RATIONALE FOR NEW POLICY MAY

APPLY WELL TO U.S. CONDITIONS, BUT EXTENDING IT
INDISCRIMINATELY TO BUYERS OF AMERICAN URANIUM FUEL,
IGNORING THEIR DIFFERING ECONOMIC AND ENERGY CIRCUM-
STANCES, IS IMPETUOUS AND EGOCENTRIC.

4. THE NEW POLICY SEEMS TO OVERPLAY DANGERS OF
PLUTONIUM EXTRACTION AND UNDERPLAY LONG-TERM BENEFITS
TO MANKIND FROM EXTENDED USE OF NUCLEAR FUEL THAT
RESULTS FROM PLUTONIUM UTILIZATION.

5. IS NOT THIS NEW POLICY BEING FOMENTED BY AMERICAN
NUCLEAR POWER INDUSTRY AS STRATEGEM TO RECOUP ITS
TECHNOLOGICAL LAG THAT HAS GIVEN EUROPEAN COMPETITORS
SOME LEAD IN INTERNATIONAL MARKET?

6. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS UNDERLYING NEW POLICY CONTAINS
SUCH UNCERTAIN OR UNKNOWN ELEMENTS AS SIZE OF URANIUM
ORE RESERVES, PACE OF WORLD FBR DEVELOPMENT, COMPETI-
TIVENESS OF NUCLEAR FUEL WITH FOSSIL FUEL, ETC. UNTIL
THESE ARE BETTER ANALYZED, IS NOT FOUNDATION FOR NEW
POLICY QUITE SHAKY?

7. JAPAN HAS TESTED OUT REPROCESSING METHOD THAT PRODUCES MIXTURE
OF PLUTONIUM AND URANIUM, OBVIATING DANGER OF PRODUCING WEAPONS
USING PURE PLUTONIUM. NEWSPAPERS REPORT AMERICA'S BATTELLE
RESEARCH IS NOW STUDYING THIS METHOD. DOES NOT THIS PROMISE
EARLY, EASY SOLUTION TO PROLIFERATION PROBLEM?

8. ADMITTING SOME IRREDUCEABLE LEVEL OF RISK FROM USING PLUTONIUM
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IN FUEL SYCLE, WOULD NOT TRADE-OFF BE WORTHWHILE IN CONTEXT OF
FORESEEABLE EXHAUSTION OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND LAG IN
BRINGING SUCH REPLACEMENT POWER SOURCES AS SOLAR ENERGY INTO
FULL USE?

9. AS FOSSIL FUEL SUPPLIES DWINDLE AND THEIR COST BECOMES
EXTRAVAGANT, JAPAN MUST HAVE IRON-CLAD ASSURANCE OF URANIUM FUEL
SUPPLY AND ACCESS TO REPROCESSING. IF JAPAN ABSTAINS FROM
DEVELOPING COMMERCIAL REPROCESSING CAPABILITY, CAN U.S. GUARANTEE
ASSURED SUPPLY OF ENRICHED URANIUM AND CAN PROPOSED REGIONAL
REPROCESSING FACILITIES BE REASONABLY EXPECTED TO MEET EXPANDING
NEEDS?

10. EVEN IF JAPAN FALLS INTO LINE WITH NEW U.S. POLICY, WHAT
SITUATION WILL PERTAIN IF FRANCE, FRG AND COMMUNIST NATIONS DO NOT?

11. PRESS REPORTS IMPLY WHOLE PROBLEM MIGHT BE RESOLVED BY
DEPENDING ON THORIUM/U-233 FUEL CYCLE. WHY HAVE U.S. POLICY
PRONOUNCEMENTS IGNORED THIS POSSIBILITY?

12. NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION IS SPURRED LESS BY HYPOTHESIZED DANGERS OF PLUTONIUM EXTRACTION THAN BY SUPER POWERS' GROWING NUCLEAR ARSENALS AND THEIR CURRENT AND PAST USE OF SUCH ARSENALS TO GAIN POLITICAL LEVERAGE, WHICH HAS MADE NON-NUCLEAR STATES WANT N-ARMS AND IMPELLED CHINA AND FRANCE TO SHUN NUCLEAR ARMS CONSTRAINTS. NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT BY U.S. AND USSR, WHICH IS OBLIGATION THEY ASSUMED UNDER NPT, WOULD BE BEST CHECK AGAINST NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION.

13. IF AMERICA CANNOT TRUST PACIFIST, NUCLEAR-ALLERGIC JAPAN WITH REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGY, WHOM CAN IT TRUST?

14. THE ARTICLE SHOULD MEET THESE POINTS HEAD ON AND PROVIDE FULLEST POSSIBLE NON-TECHNICAL RESPONSES, WHILE GOING BEYOND MERE RESTATEMENT OF POLICY DEFINITION.

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